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PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS.

Directions for combating plague.

[Measures adopted by the Federal council (Bundesrath) of the German Empire.]

BERLIN, GERMANY, *September 26, 1902.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a synopsized translation of the directions for combating plague, approved at a session of the Federal council (Bundesrath) on July 3, 1902.

Respectfully,

FRANK H. MASON,
United States Consul General.

The SURGEON-GENERAL.

[Translated in consulate.]

I. PREVENTIVE MEASURES.

Section 1. In times of danger of an outbreak of plague, increased attention is to be paid to the dwellings and keeping clean of the same. This applies especially to dark, badly ventilated, and overcrowded houses, cellar dwelling, tenement houses, as well as houses in which there is a stall for cattle under the same roof. If, on inspection, unhealthy conditions are found to exist, the same are to be promptly dealt with.

Sec. 2. The arrangements for supplying the public with drinking water and for the disposal of rubbish are to be under the constant supervision of the State officials.

Sec. 3. Special attention is to be directed to the destruction of rats, mice, and other vermin.

Sec. 4. In places threatened by the plague, where sanitary commissions do not already exist, such are to be created.

Sec. 5. Wherever possible, public disinfecting institutions are to be equipped with steam disinfecting apparatus.

Sec. 6. The police authorities shall keep an eye upon persons arriving from districts infected with plague.

II. OBLIGATION TO REPORT PLAGUE CASES TO THE AUTHORITIES.

Sec. 7. Every case of pest (oriental bubonic plague) and every death resulting therefrom must be reported to the local police authorities, either verbally or in writing.

Sec. 8. The following persons have the obligation to notify the authorities of plague cases: (1) The medical man called in to treat the case; (2) the head of the household; (3) any other person engaged to take care of the patient; (4) the owner of the house, and (5) the undertaker. The obligation of those persons mentioned under 2 to 5 to report plague cases only results when one of the foregoing is not present.

Sec. 9. The police officials of districts threatened with plague must issue public notices calling attention to the duty of notifying the authorities of the occurrence of cases of plague.

III. INVESTIGATIONS REGARDING THE DISEASE.

Sec. 10. Immediately upon being informed of the outbreak of plague or of a disease suspected to be plague, the police authorities must notify the public health officer, who must make investigations on the spot.

Sec. 11. When a death results from a disease suspected to be plague, the police may order a post-mortem examination if the medical officer considers it necessary or advisable. The doctor who treated the patient has the right to be present at the autopsy.

Sec. 12. When the medical officer reports that plague has broken out the police officials shall immediately take the necessary steps for the prevention of the spread of the disease.

Sec. 13. The imperial health office (Kaiserlichen-Gesundheitsamt) must be promptly notified as soon as the medical officer discovers a case of plague or of suspected plague.

Furthermore, the local authorities shall furnish the imperial health office with (a) daily bulletins regarding the progress of the disease and the deaths resulting therefrom, specifying the place and district, and (b) weekly reports of the course of the disease in the separate districts, according to the blank—Exhibit 6—hereto attached.

Sec. 14. The final decision regarding the first case of plague in a specified district shall be rendered by an expert appointed by the central authorities. The shipment of suspected plague material may, as a rule, only take place (1) when the sending of a bacteriological expert to examine the case on the spot can not take place quickly enough, or not at all; (2) when the expert desires to send material for examination to a laboratory, while he himself remains on the spot; and (3) when the material to be examined is to be sent from one laboratory to another.

IV. MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THE PLAGUE.

Sec. 15. Plague patients, or persons suspected to be suffering with plague must be promptly isolated.

Sec. 16. Under certain circumstances plague patients, instead of being isolated in a hospital, may be left in their own homes and the healthy persons must be removed from the house.

Sec. 17. For the transportation of plague patients, public conveyances such as cabs and street cars shall not, as a rule, be used.

Proper care shall be taken for the disinfection of vehicles which have been used for the transportation of persons suffering with plague before such conveyances are used for other purposes.

Sec. 18. The dead bodies of persons who have succumbed to plague are to be wrapped in cloths saturated with disinfecting fluid and placed in coffins on the bottom of which a quantity of sawdust or other absorbing material is to be strewed. The washing of the corpse is to be avoided.

A post-mortem examination may only be made by direction of or with the approval of the police authorities.

Sec. 19. In houses in which plague cases occur, the requisite measures for disinfecting excrement of the patients must be taken.

Sec. 20. If the disinfection of furniture, etc., can not be carried out or is too expensive in proportion to the value of the article, the destruction of the same may be ordered.

Sec. 21. The competent authorities must take care to prevent the assembling of people in crowds (at fairs, markets, etc.) in the vicinity of places infected with plague.

Sec. 22. Young people from houses in which plague has broken out must be kept away from school as long as the medical officer considers there is a possibility of a spread of the disease from such dwellings.

The schools may be ordered to be closed in any district infected with plague.

Sec. 23. Provision stores in houses in which a case of plague has occurred, must be closed.

Sec. 24. The exportation of rags, worn body linen, used bed clothes, articles of dress, old clothes, etc., from districts infected with plague is expressly prohibited.

Sec. 25. In districts infected with plague and where a compulsory inspection of dead bodies before burial does not exist, such a regulation must be made and enforced.

Sec. 26. In places infected with plague or threatened with an outbreak of the disease, the use of wells, pools, water courses, as well as of public bathing establishments, swimming baths, laundries, and public closets, may be prohibited. Such an order, however, may only be issued with the approval of the public health officer.

Sec. 27. The competent State authorities can compel the local municipal officials to take the measures requisite for combating plague. For meeting the necessary expenditure the prescriptions of section 28 apply.

Sec. 28. The costs entailed by the Governmental investigations as described in section 10 and the expenses of disinfection when ordered by the police authorities are to be paid from the public funds.

Sec. 29. Medical officers in the meaning of the law are physicians employed by the State or appointed with the approval of the State.

Sec. 30. The competent military and naval officials shall report to the proper civil authorities all cases of plague occurring in the army and navy, respectively.

Sec. 31. Regarding the surveillance to be exercised by the sanitary police over vessels

entering German ports, the regulations existing in the various Federal maritime States remain in force for the present.

Sec. 32. The responsibility for carrying out preventive measures in the following cases rests with the military and naval authorities, respectively: (1) So far as soldiers and sailors in active service are concerned; (2) persons employed in army buildings or in the offices of the imperial navy; (3) troops on the march, and (4) with respect to all lands and establishments used by the military and naval authorities, respectively.

Sec. 33. The responsibility for carrying out protective measures against plague in the railway and telegraphic service rests exclusively with the imperial authorities.

Sec. 34. The authorities of the Federal States are bound to render mutual assistance in combating plague.

Sec. 35. The conservation of plague cultures and scientific experiments with the same are only permissible with the approval of the central authorities.

Sec. 36. The indemnification of persons suffering losses resulting from disinfection measures, etc., is governed by sections 28 to 34 of the law.

Exhibit 6.—Report to be rendered weekly to imperial health officer of the plague cases which occurred during the period from — to —, 190—, suspected plague cases not to be included.

1. Name of town and district.
2. Number of inhabitants last census.
3. Recent cases.
4. Of those who have arrived from other towns already ill or within ten days of illness. Of whom, within the last ten days before the illness or already ill, arrived from other towns.
5. Died.
6. Remarks, especially the date of outbreak in the district and whence the persons mentioned in paragraph 4 came.

Exhibit 4.—Blank for reporting a plague case.—Place where the case occurred ——— Dwelling (street, house number, floor) ———.

Patients: Family name ———. Sex: Male or female (respective word to be underlined) ———. Age ———. Profession or trade ———. Place where employed or carrying on business ———.

Day when taken ill ———. Day of death ———. Remarks (especially whether recently arrived, when and from what place) ———.

Exhibit 1.—Directions for obtaining material for examination regarding plague.

Exhibit 2.—Instruction regarding plague (for medical men).

Exhibit 3.—Instruction regarding plague (for laymen).

Exhibit 4.—Blank to be filled out when reporting a case of plague.

Exhibit 5.—List of plague cases.

Exhibit 6.—Form for weekly reports to imperial health office.

Exhibit 7.—Directions for the bacteriological examination of suspected-plague cases.

Exhibit 8.—Directions for disinfection.

Exhibit 9.—Regulations governing traffic on the railroads in times of plague.

Exhibit 10.—Regulations for making experiments with plague cultures.

Bacteriological examination and diagnosis of plague.—Extract from article by Dr. Balfour Stewart, Plague Research Laboratory, Bombay.

BERLIN, GERMANY, September 30, 1902.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit, under separate cover, an article by Dr. Overbeck and Professor Kossel of the imperial health office in Berlin, on the bacteriological examination and diagnosis of plague.

In their elaborate treatise the authors make reference to the following works, among others:

Bitter.—Report of the Commission sent by the Egyptian Government to Bombay to Study Plague.

Hankin and B. H. F. Leumann.—A Method of Rapidly Identifying the Microbe of Bubonic Plague.

Hewlett, R. T.—The Bacillus of Bubonic Plague. (Transactions of the British Institute for Preventive Medicine; first series, p. 137.)

Kitasato.—Preliminary Notice of the Bacillus of Bubonic Plague.

Stewart, C. B.—The Bacteriological Diagnosis of Plague. (British Medical Journal, No. 2021.)